

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for managing the planning and performance of multiple software projects, the multiple software projects comprising one or more projects that are identified as a mandatory type, one or more projects that are identified as nonmandatory type, and one or more projects of an ad hoc type that arise intermittently and are subject to change, the method comprising:

using a processing system for managing the planning and performance of multiple software projects, the processing system performing the following steps:

calculating a number of working hours available for performance of the multiple software projects;

estimating the time required for completion of each project;

based on said time estimates, allocating a first amount of time for performance of said mandatory projects, allocating a second amount of time for performance of said ad hoc projects, and allocating a third amount of time to be held in reserve, wherein the sum of the first, second, and third amounts of time is less than or equal to said available hours, and the third amount of time is less than a preselected threshold value;

assigning tasks associated with the projects for performance;

periodically inputting an actual time spent in performing the projects and a current status of each project;

based on the actual time spent and current status for each project, re-estimating the time required for completing each project;

for each mandatory type project, determining if there exists a negative or positive time imbalance between the allocated time for completion and the re-estimated time for completion;

if there exists a negative time imbalance, reallocating time held in reserve to one or more mandatory type projects to eliminate the time imbalance;

if there exists a positive time imbalance, performing one or more of the following operations to eliminate the positive time imbalance:

re-identifying one or more nonmandatory projects as mandatory;

reallocating time from one or more mandatory type projects to time held in reserve;

reallocating time from one or more mandatory type projects to one or more ad hoc projects; and

reallocating time from one or more mandatory type projects to establish an earlier estimated completion date for one or more projects;

for each ad hoc type project, determining if there exists a negative or positive time imbalance between the allocated time for completion and the re-estimated time for completion;

if there exists a negative time imbalance, reallocating time held in reserve to one or more ad hoc projects to eliminate the time imbalance;

if there exists a positive time imbalance, performing one or more of the following operations to eliminate the positive time imbalance:

reallocating time from one or more ad hoc projects to one time held in reserve;

reallocating time from one or more ad hoc projects to one or more mandatory type projects;

reallocating time from one or more ad hoc projects to one or more nonmandatory projects and re-identifying the one or more nonmandatory projects as mandatory; and

reallocating the time from one or more ad hoc projects to establish an earlier estimated completion date for one or more projects.

~~project type, determining if there exists a time imbalance between the allocated time for completion and the reestimated time for completion; and~~

~~if there exists a time imbalance, reallocating the first, second, and third amounts of time to eliminate the time imbalance.~~

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein each project comprises one or

more identified tasks, the estimating step including estimating the time required for completion of each of said identified tasks and storing the estimates for each task in a database.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the estimating step is based on previously performed tasks of a similar nature.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including logging positive and negative time imbalances for future estimates.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the assigning step includes assigning to a worker tasks associated with mandatory projects and tasks associated with ad hoc projects.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the calculating step includes determining a total supply of work hours and subtracting an estimated number of hours for nonproduction activities.

7-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) An information handling system, comprising:
a processing system; and
a software project planning and management system interconnected with said processing system, the software project planning and management system for managing the planning and performance of multiple software projects, the multiple projects comprising one or more projects that are identified as a mandatory type, one or more projects that are identified as nonmandatory type, and one or more projects of an ad hoc type that arise intermittently and are subject to change, the project planning and management system configured to:

calculate a number of working hours available for performance of the multiple projects;

estimate the time required for completion of each project;

based on said time estimates, allocate a first amount of time for performance of said mandatory projects, a second amount of time for performance of said ad hoc projects, and a third amount of time to be held in reserve, wherein the sum of the first, second, and third amounts of time is less than or equal to said available hours;

record assignments of tasks associated with the projects for performance;

periodically receive input of an actual time spent in performing the projects and a current status of each project;

reestimate, based on the actual time spent and current status for each project, the time required for completing each project;

determine, for each mandatory type project, determining if there exists a negative or positive time imbalance between the allocated time for completion and the re-estimated time for completion;

if there exists a negative time imbalance, reallocating time held in reserve to one or more mandatory type projects to eliminate the time imbalance;

if there exists a positive time imbalance, performing one or more of the following operations to eliminate the positive time imbalance;

re-identifying one or more nonmandatory projects as mandatory;

reallocating time from one or more mandatory type projects to time held in reserve;

reallocating time from one or more mandatory type projects to one or more ad hoc projects; and

reallocating time from one or more mandatory type projects to establish an earlier estimated completion date for one or more projects;

for each ad hoc type project, determining if there exists a negative or positive time imbalance between the allocated time for completion and the re-estimated time for completion;

if there exists a negative time imbalance, reallocating time held in reserve to one or more ad hoc projects to eliminate the time imbalance;

if there exists a positive time imbalance, performing one or more of the following operations to eliminate the positive time imbalance:

reallocating time from one or more ad hoc projects to one time held in reserve;

reallocating time from one or more ad hoc projects to one or more mandatory type projects;

reallocating time from one or more ad hoc projects to one or more nonmandatory projects and re-identifying the one or more nonmandatory projects as mandatory; and

reallocating the time from one or more ad hoc projects to establish an earlier estimated completion date for one or more projects.

~~project type, if there exists a time imbalance between the allocated time for completion and the reestimated time for completion; and~~

~~if there exists a time imbalance, reallocating the first, second, and third amounts of time to eliminate the time imbalance.~~

14. (Original) The information handling system of claim 13, wherein each project comprises one or more identified tasks, and further wherein the project planning and management system is configured to estimate, for each project, the time required for completion of each of said identified tasks and to store the estimates in a database.

15. (Original) The information handling system of claim 13, wherein the project planning and management system is configured to estimate the time required for completion of each project based on previously performed tasks of a similar nature.

16. (Original) The information handling system of claim 13, wherein the project planning and management system is configured to log positive and negative time imbalances.

17. (Original) The information handling system of claim 13, wherein the project planning and management system is configured to record assignments of tasks associated with mandatory projects and tasks associated with ad hoc projects to a worker.

18. (Original) The information handling system of claim 13, wherein the project planning and management system is configured to calculate the number of working hours available by determining a total supply of work hours and subtracting an estimated number of hours for nonproduction activities.

19-24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A planning system for the planning and management of multiple projects, the multiple projects comprising one or more projects that are identified as a mandatory type, one or more projects that are identified as nonmandatory type, and one or more projects of an ad hoc type that arise intermittently and are subject to change, the system comprising:

an input means for entering project information and task information associated with each project, the project information identifying each project as being of a mandatory, nonmandatory, or ad hoc type, and the task information describing each task to be performed by users of the system and an estimated duration of each task;

a work hour calculator for calculating a number of working hours available for performance of the multiple projects;

an allocation engine for allocating a first amount of time for performance of said mandatory projects, a second amount of time for performance of said ad hoc projects, and a third amount of time to be held in reserve, wherein the sum of the first, second, and third amounts of time is less than or equal to said available hours;

a schedule preparation engine for preparing a schedule of tasks for performance, the schedule comprising an estimated time for the performance of each task;

a time tracking system for recording actual time spent in performing the projects and a current status of each project;

a time imbalance calculator for detecting a difference between actual time spent in performance of the projects and the estimated time for performance of the projects; and

an allocation modification engine for reestimating the time required for completing each project based on the actual time spent and current status for each project and for each mandatory type project, determining if there exists a negative or positive time

imbalance between the allocated time for completion and the re-estimated time for completion;

if there exists a negative time imbalance, reallocating time held in reserve to one or more mandatory type projects to eliminate the time imbalance:

if there exists a positive time imbalance, performing one or more of the following operations to eliminate the positive time imbalance:

re-identifying one or more nonmandatory projects as mandatory;

reallocating time from one or more mandatory type projects to time held in reserve;

reallocating time from one or more mandatory type projects to one or more ad hoc projects; and

reallocating time from one or more mandatory type projects to establish an earlier estimated completion date for one or more projects;

for each ad hoc type project, determining if there exists a negative or positive time imbalance between the allocated time for completion and the re-estimated time for completion;

if there exists a negative time imbalance, reallocating time held in reserve to one or more ad hoc projects to eliminate the time imbalance;

if there exists a positive time imbalance, performing one or more of the following operations to eliminate the positive time imbalance:

reallocating time from one or more ad hoc projects to one time held in reserve;

reallocating time from one or more ad hoc projects to one or more mandatory type projects;

reallocating time from one or more ad hoc projects to one or more nonmandatory projects and re-identifying the one or more nonmandatory projects as mandatory; and

reallocating the time from one or more ad hoc projects to establish an earlier estimated completion date for one or more projects.

26. (Original) The planning system of claim 25, wherein the estimated time

required for completion of each task is based on previously performed tasks of a similar nature.

27. (Original) The planning system of claim 25, wherein the schedule preparation engine schedules tasks associated with mandatory projects and tasks associated with ad hoc projects to a worker.

28. (Original) The planning system of claim 25, wherein the work hour calculator calculates the number of working hours available by determining a total supply of work hours and subtracting an estimated number of hours for nonproduction activities.

29-33. (Cancelled)